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UNH Student Initiative Recycles 57,000 Pounds of Trash Into Treasure

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UNH Media Relations

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Recommended Citation

Potier, Beth, "UNH Student Initiative Recycles 57,000 Pounds of Trash Into Treasure" (2011). *UNH Today*. 3769.
<https://scholars.unh.edu/news/3769>

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Media Relations

UNH Student Initiative Recycles 57,000 Pounds Of Trash Into Treasure

September 6, 2011



DURHAM, N.H. – Back-to-school shopping came cheaper to savvy University of New Hampshire students this year, thanks to the first-ever Trash 2 Treasure yard sale during move-in weekend (Aug. 26 and 27, 2011). Entirely student led, Trash 2 Treasure sold more than 10,000 items collected from departing students in May. Despite being truncated from three days to two in preparation for Hurricane Irene, the sale brought in \$11,750 and diverted an estimated 57,000 pounds of trash from landfills.

Beneath a 6,500 square-foot tent on campus, incoming first-years and returning students snapped up bargain-priced items ranging from the essential to the eclectic. In addition to 200 shower caddies, 120 couches, 100 sets of bed risers and more than 100 television sets, shoppers grabbed life-sized cutouts of pop queens Britney Spears and Kelly Clarkson, a Mickey Mouse costume and a pair of blue sparkled jumpsuits, and posters and paraphernalia advertising some students' beverage of choice.

Incoming students sought bargains during move-in weekend at the first-ever Trash 2 Treasure yard sale at the University of New Hampshire. Credit: Lisa Nugent, UNH Photographic Services

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"Over and over, I heard 'wow, I can't believe someone would get rid of this,'" says UNH junior Alex Freid, who is steering Trash 2 Treasure, or T2T, with sophomore Emily Spognardi. They sold nearly all their stock, donating leftover items to Operation Blessing, a Portsmouth non-profit that provides household goods, clothing, and furniture to people in crisis in the Seacoast area.

The organizers believe theirs is the first such initiative that is entirely student-led and self-sustaining. Expenses – including trucks, summer storage, and tent rental -- for the inaugural event were offset by fund-raising and a grant from the UNH Parents Association. Money raised from the recent yard sale will offset next year's expenses.

Buoyed by their initial success, the organizers are already planning for T2T's second year. Recruiting and organizing more volunteers than the 30 or so who moved dressers and found mates for shoes this year is a priority, as are streamlining their move-out collection and better preparing for inclement weather. "We learned a lot, and now we have the whole year ahead of us to plan," says Freid. In the future, he says, the organizers hope to help other universities replicate a similar program.

"So many people told us, 'This is such a great idea. Thank you for doing it,'" Freid says.

More information is available www.unh.edu/trash2treasure; www.facebook.com/unhtrash2treasure; or www.twitter.com/unht2t. Read about the project in UNH Magazine: <http://unhmagazine.unh.edu/sp11/trash2treasure.html>.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

-30-

Photographs available to download:

http://unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2011/sep/bp01treasure_01.jpg

Caption: Incoming students sought bargains during move-in weekend at the first-ever Trash 2 Treasure yard sale at the University of New Hampshire.

Credit: Lisa Nugent, UNH Photographic Services

http://unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2011/sep/bp01treasure_02.jpg

Caption: Shower caddies, bed risers and trash cans were among the bargain-priced essentials for sale at the first-ever Trash 2 Treasure yard sale at the University of New Hampshire during move-in weekend.

Credit: Lisa Nugent, UNH Photographic Services

http://unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2011/sep/bp01treasure_03.jpg

Caption: Trash 2 Treasure volunteers, from left, Lauren Banker '13, Erica Vazza '14, Emily Spognardi '14 and Alex Freid '13

Credit: Lisa Nugent, UNH Photographic Services

Reporters and editors: Student organizers Alex Freid (603-608-9859, freid.alex@gmail.com) and Emily Spognardi (603-508-1706, emily.spognardi@gmail.com) are available for comment.

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T-hall

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